
Committee Meeting

of

STATE LEASING AND SPACE UTILIZATION COMMITTEE

LOCATION: Committee Room 7
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: February 27, 2023
12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Nicholas P. Scutari, Chair
Assemblyman Raj Mukherji
Jeffrey DeCicco



ALSO PRESENT:

Carmelo T. Costantino
Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aide

Gary A. Kotler, Esq.
Committee Counsel

Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
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SENATOR NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI (Chair):

Welcome.

OK, I'll call this Joint State Leasing and Space Utilization Committee meeting to order.

Today is February 27, 2023.

First, I would like to welcome the newest Committee member, from the -- representative of the Treasury.

Jeffrey, how do you say your last name?

MR. DeCICCO: De-cheek-oh.

SENATOR SCUTARI: De-cheek-oh, OK.

Jeffrey DeCicco is now a member of the Committee as the designee from the Treasurer, along with Assemblyman Mukherji and myself. We've been on this Committee for quite a while.

OK, roll call.

MR. KAMINSKI: Roll call.

Senator Scutari.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Here.

MR. KAMINSKI: Assemblyman Mukherji.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Present.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. DeCicco.

MR. DeCICCO: Here.

MR. KAMINSKI: Senator, you have three members in attendance; you have a quorum.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

The first order of business -- really, this is the first meeting of the year 2023, I don't think we had a Chairman for 2022 -- is the organization of the Committee and annual election of a Chair.

Do we have a motion for a Chair?

MR. KAMINSKI: I can read a statement.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Go ahead.

MR. KAMINSKI: According to 52:18A-191.4, State Leasing and Space Utilization Committee established the Committee shall annually select a chairman from among its members.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: I will nominate the honorable Nicholas Scutari to serve as Chair of this august Committee.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you, Assemblyman.

We don't need a second (indiscernible), right?

MR. KAMINSKI: No.

SENATOR SCUTARI: OK.

Roll call.

MR. KAMINSKI: Roll call.

Senator Scutari.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Assemblyman Mukherji.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. DeCicco.

MR. DeCICCO: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. Chairman, you have three votes in the affirmative, zero in the negative.

The motion carries. You are hereby elected to serve as Committee Chairman until the next annual election.

SENATOR SCUTARI: See you next year. No, just kidding.

(laughter)

Thank you.

OK, the first order of business: presentations of notices -- proposed leases. And, we have five such ones on today's agenda, starting with proposed lease number 4475.

MR. KAMINSKI: Excuse me, Senator.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Approval of the previous meeting minutes.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Ah, I jumped ahead. I apologize.

We have to approve the previous minutes of our previous meeting -- December 20, 2021. Minutes have been distributed.

Anything on the minutes? (no response)

Seeing none, can I get a motion to approve the minutes?

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: So moved.

MR. DeCICCO: Second.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Roll call.

MR. KAMINSKI: Excuse me, guys, I'm being advised that we need to have our red mic button on--

They're all cut off.

SENATOR SCUTARI: That's because I have the cut off on. I'm sorry.

MR. KAMINSKI: So, on the motion.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Motion to approve the minutes of December 20, 2021.

Can I have a motion?

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: So moved.

MR. DeCICCO: Second.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Roll call.

MR. KAMINSKI: Senator Scutari.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Assemblyman Mukherji.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. DeCicco.

MR. DeCICCO: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. Chairman, you have three votes in affirmative, zero in negative. The motion carries.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

OK, now back to the presentation of the notices of proposed leases. First one is 4475.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is my mic on?

SENATOR SCUTARI: It is.

CHRISTOPHER CHIANESE: Hi, I am Chris Chianese, the Director of Property Management and Construction.

I am here today with a thank you for the opportunity to present these five most proposed leases.

We submitted almost 25 others for consideration. We hope that you'll hear those in the near future.

First NPL is 4475. This NPL is an extension of a lease term for Law and Public Safety, the Division of State Police Emergency Response and Internal Affairs Investigation Bureau in the northern area, located at 20 Audrey Place in Fairfield, for 6,890 square feet. The advertisement was waived since the re-negotiation showed a cost savings. The location has 37 employees and has approximately 30 visitors a day with parking. The current lease expired on January 31, 2022.

Thank you.

SENATOR SCUTARI: So, let me just make a -- let me just make a comment about our failure to meet and consider those other notices, proposed leases -- not that we don't respect all the work that you guys and gals have done with respect to cost savings and the footprint with respect to state offices.

But, I've asked the Governor's Office for a plan. What we'd like is a plan. We have a reduction in the workforce each and every year that's going forward. Every governor that I've ever served on has saw a reduction in the workforce. And, they're proud of that -- they want to say they're doing more with less. I'm not sure (indiscernible) that, but, they seem to be sticking with that, and so there are less and less state employees every year.

But, more important, we have reduced the workforce by 40% in terms of its requirement to show up at the office. So, my position is we're moving into a new phase of work. If we're going to go to a work-from-home scenario that is long term, then we should be considering flexible space. Space where you don't have an office and your degree hanging on the wall and it's your office, because you're only there three days a week. Perhaps we

should be flexible with the workspace that we're offering people to utilize, because people aren't there.

You walk through these buildings -- and, we started doing that without notice -- to see who is in the office. We're extending these leases for five and 10 years, for departments that, quite frankly, it seems as though are many times sparsely attended. And, I'm not going to allow for extensions and leases for that. That's just my position on it. It is not a good use of taxpayer dollars to continue to extraordinarily extend leases when no one is in the buildings.

And, that's not necessarily all *your* doing. You're just working with the space, requirements they've given to you. But, this is more of a message for the administration. If they're going to continue to allow people to work from home, then we've got to shrink the footprint of government, because there should be an attendance savings. It may not be 40%, but it should be something.

Assemblyman Mukherji and I went out to Champaign, Illinois, a few years ago to look at a remote workspace that we lease from this Committee, because the employees were out there and they were housed out in Champaign, Illinois for the Department of Taxation. I can't imagine that that's needed anymore in the year 2023, with Zoom, and remote work being allowed -- that we need that building. Many of those employees never stepped foot in New Jersey, and they're New Jersey employees.

So, my frustration continues to be is that State Government doesn't seem to be all working together. So, I understand that these notices of proposed leases have been put together painstakingly with lots and lots of work by your offices, but there are other considerations that we're taking into

account. It's not by any mistake that these five NPLs were specifically selected, because it's our understanding that it is the greatest opportunity for these folks that will be at work each and every day, so then we could justify the extension of those leases.

So, with that, you've already made your presentation with respect to proposed lease 4475. Any questions on that lease? (no response)

Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion.

MR. DeCICCO: So moved.

SENATOR SCUTARI: I'll second it.

Roll call.

MR. KAMINSKI: Senator Scutari.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Assemblyman Mukherji.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. DeCicco.

MR. DeCICCO: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. Chairman, you have three votes in the affirmative and zero in the negative. The motion carries.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

The next order of business is notice of proposed lease: 4404.

MR. CHIANESE: NPL 4404. This NPL is for a new lease term of five years with five-year renewal option upon approval by the Committee for Law and Public Safety, State Police -- Marine Services Bureau, located at 2 Point Road in Waretown, for five boat slips and 1,600 square feet of office space. This site works for this unit, since it patrols this area heavily in the summer months, but also year-round.

The ocean substation exists because of the distance from the Point Pleasant Station and the Atlantic City Marine Station. This lease is critical to properly cover the area and provide mariners with police and rescue services.

Thank you.

SENATOR SCUTARI: I've actually been to this location, OK. Any questions regarding the notice of proposed lease 4404? (no response)

Seeing none, I will entertain a motion.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: So moved.

MR. DeCICCO: Second.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Roll call.

MR. KAMINSKI: Senator Scutari.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Assemblyman Mukherji.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. Jeffrey DeCicco.

MR. DeCICCO: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. Chairman, you have three votes in the affirmative and zero in the negative. The motion carries.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

The next order of business is the notice of proposed lease 4742.

MR. CHIANESE: NPL 4742. This NPL was advertised for Law and Public Safety, State Police -- Northern Regional Lab. The NPL is located at 44 Deforest Ave. in East Hanover.

Following Committee approval of the proposed 10-year lease term and the existing two-year interim rental agreement will terminate, and the term of the 10-year lease will commence. The two-year interim rental agreement began on May 1, 2022. The location was previously in Little Falls and unfortunately experienced three major floods over the last 10 years. The most recent flood was Tropical Storm Ida in the fall of 2021, which resulted in a significant amount of water entering the facility and leaving the facility uninhabitable. As a result, employees had to be moved to other facilities until this facility was secured.

Northern Lab is one of the four regional crime labs and has significant and important responsibilities related to forensic services and more for New Jersey's northernmost counties.

The State is applying for recovery funds for damages related to the flood from FEMA through the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management for relocation costs.

Thank you.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

Any questions on the lease for the crime lab? (no response)

Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion.

MR. DeCICCO: So moved.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Second.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Roll call, please.

MR. KAMINSKI: Senator Scutari.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Assemblyman Mukherji.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. DeCicco.

MR. DeCICCO: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. Chairman, you have three votes in the affirmative, zero in the negative. The motion carries.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

The next order of business is notice of proposed lease 4691.

MR. CHIANESE: This NPL is for the State Police located at Two Executive Campus, Suite 300, on 2370 Route 70 in Cherry Hill.

The NPL is not to exceed 3,967 square feet. Advertisement was waived, as the lease extension was achieved with cost savings. The term is for three years with no renewal options. The site provides for office space for 22 employees and 27 parking spaces.

Thank you.

SENATOR SCUTARI: What's the apartment spaces used for?

MR. CHIANESE: Parking spaces?

SENATOR SCUTARI: Oh, parking. I thought you said apartment. I misspoke, I am sorry.

Any questions regarding the proposed lease? (no response)

Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion.

MR. DeCICCO: Motion.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Second.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Roll call, please.

MR. KAMINSKI: Senator Scutari.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Assemblyman Mukherji.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. DeCicco.

MR. DeCICCO: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. Chairman, you have three votes in the affirmative, zero in the negative. The motion carries.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

The final notice of proposed lease is Number 4750.

MR. CHIANESE: This NPL was advertised for Military and Veterans Affairs, and is located at 14-16 Howe Ave. in Passaic. The term is for five years with cancelation options each year. The NPL will provide a new storefront and recruiting office with the New Jersey National Guard for 1,510 square feet.

The (indiscernible) feels this location will provide a greater access to a larger and diversified market.

Thank you.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

Any questions regarding lease Number 4750? (no response)

Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Motion.

MR. DeCICCO: Second.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Roll call, please.

MR. KAMINSKI: Senator Scutari.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Assemblyman Mukherji.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. DeCicco.

MR. DeCICCO: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. Chairman, you have three votes in the affirmative, zero in the negative. The motion carries.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

Any further new business, old business? (no response)

Seeing none, I'll move to adjourn.

Roll call, please.

MR. KAMINSKI: Senator Scutari.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Assemblyman Mukherji.

ASSEMBLYMAN MUKHERJI: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. DeCicco.

MR. DeCICCO: Yes.

MR. KAMINSKI: Mr. Chairman, you have three votes in the affirmative, zero in the negative. The motion carries.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you.

MR. KAMINSKI: The meeting is adjourned.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)